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HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
NEWS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 15, 2013

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**April 15-19 is Michigan Public Health Week**

GRAND RAPIDS – If you live, work, or play in Kent County, there is a good chance that the employees of the Kent County Health Department are helping you, and you might not even know it. Whether dining in a restaurant, owning a dog, building a new home, raising children, or swimming in a public pool, KCHD is preventing illness, protecting the public, and promoting public health. Next week, April 15-19, Michigan recognizes these efforts, by celebrating Michigan Public Health Week.

"Here in Kent County, our staff is dedicated to educating the public about preventing chronic disease and prolonging life," said Adam London, acting Health Officer. "We have done much work with dozens of organizations, compiling data, and reaching out to residents to determine their concerns through the Community Health Needs Assessment. We are continuing to build on that with the recently-released Community Health Improvement Plan."

Research shows that investing just \$10 per person each year in proven, community-based public health efforts can save the nation more than \$16 billion within five years. That's a \$5.60 return for every \$1 invested! We are seeing results here in Kent County. For example, the Kent County Interconception Care Program is helping mothers who experienced a miscarriage, premature birth or low birth-weight delivery. By educating the mother about nutritional care, encouraging an 18 month delay between pregnancies, and delivering proper dental care, the next pregnancy lasts on average 5 weeks longer, and the baby weighs 2.5 pounds more at birth. In addition to healthier babies, there is a huge cost benefit for Interconception Care Program participants. First year medical costs for a preterm infant can run more than \$32,300. That is nearly ten times more than caring for a healthy, full-term infant, \$3,325, according to a report in the Institute for Medicine in 2006.

"Our KCHD staff helps people in a variety of settings: in our clinics, in classrooms, and in the homes of our clients," London said. "We are extremely fortunate to have such a dedicated group of employees advocating on behalf of Kent County residents."

During the week, the health department staff will also release guidelines for employees and for the community regarding Health Equity and Social Justice. "We have invested in our staff to better understand some of the issues of health, socio-economic, and racial inequities," London said. "Our goal is to make sure we are providing culturally-competent services for our residents, and making access to care equal for all." More information about Health Equity can be found at [www.accesskent.com/healthequity](http://www.accesskent.com/healthequity).

**(More)**

KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit [www.accesskent.com/health](http://www.accesskent.com/health).

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## HEALTH DEPARTMENT NEWS RELEASE



Each day celebrates a different theme:

- **Monday, April 15 - Ensuring a Safe, Healthy Home for Your Family** - Health and safety begin at home. Make prevention a fun family tradition.
- **Tuesday, April 16 - Providing a Safe Environment for Children at School** - Schools are the perfect setting for improving child health. Plus, children's health is a rallying point few can ignore.
- **Wednesday, April 17 - Creating a Healthy Workplace** - Wellness and safety in the workplace are good for health and for business. Let's make prevention work for us.
- **Thursday, April 18 - Protecting You While You're on the Move** - Safety is often in our own hands, but it's also tied to community design. Together, we can turn our streets into roads to better health.
- **Friday, April 19 - Empowering a Healthy Community** - Support public health efforts that create healthy opportunities for all. Good health is a community affair.

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